O.NOIR Restaurant

620 Church Street
Toronto, Ontario

www.onoir.com

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"If we can put a man on the moon we can do this"

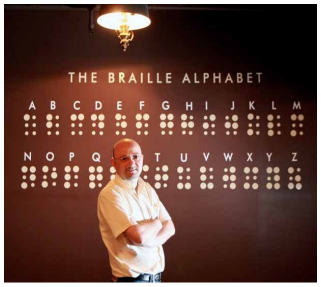
Moe Alameddine,Owner/Manager O.NOIR

Our Side of The Story

Already immensely popular in Europe, New York, and Montreal, O.NOIR invites Torontonians to experience food, drink, and conversation without their sight. While dining in complete darkness at O.NOIR, (no cell phones, lights, candles, or illumination); patrons gain a better understanding of what it's like to be visually impaired.

"You are really teaching people to use their other senses" says Moe Alameddine, Owner/Manager. "We are trying to employ people with disabilities, change attitudes, and build everyday awareness."

The O.NOIR process is simple; customers enter a lighted lounge and view the menu with a sighted hostess. After making their menu selection, patrons are led by their server/guide (who is usually visually impaired), and are seated at their table. Menus are available in Braille and accommodations are made for deaf clients who are invited to write their selections on a pad of paper and give it to the hostess in the lounge.



When asked how O.NOIR is able to provide accessible customer service in an environment that from the outset, seems extremely inaccessible, Moe replies; "common sense". "We have Braille menus that are very inexpensive. We have partnered with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), and each menu costs very little, maybe $2-$3 per copy. If a customer is deaf, they hit the table twice if they need assistance as a signal for a blind server. We ensure we have one area for walkers and wheelchairs; if we can do it in the dark, everybody can do it."

O.NOIR is also proud to be the largest private employer of visually impaired people. Over 1/3 of employees are legally blind. O.NOIR makes it a priority to partner with local disability organizations and the staff regularly exchanges ideas about user-friendly customer service.

For every establishment trying to enhance their accessibility Moe offers up this advice; "you need everyone to be a part of society, everyone needs to be included. As a business owner you should do your research; seek out information before you start, look at all the resources you can, and form partnerships with people that have the information you need. If we can put a man on the moon, we can do this!"

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